

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6132

INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT OF SPAIN 546

CARACAS FOR RSO

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ABLD ACOM ASEC TD

SUBJECT: CHANCERY BUILDING ALTERATION

REF: A. POS 292 TO CARACAS 3/13/73; B. LTR RSO JAMES BIRMINGHAM TO
RTC 1/29/74; C. LTR RSO JAMES BIRMINGHAM TO PSO JAY STRICKLIN
1/29/74 D. GRYZBK/OLSON TELECON OF 3/6/74

1. THIS POST HAS A NUMBER OF LONG STANDING PROBLEMS WHICH INTERTWINE SECURITY, COMMUNICATIONS AND BUILDING CONFIGURATION CONSIDERATIONS AND REQUIRE IMMEDIATE CORRECTION. TWO OF THE MOST PRESSING WHICH HAVE IMMEDIATE SOLUTIONS AT HAND ARE OUTLINED HEREIN. IMMEDIATE APPROVAL IS SOUGHT FROM FBO, A/OC AND A/SY.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS WALL

2. IN THE EXISTING COMMUNICATIONS AREA, THE CLASSIFIED COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT HAS FOR SEVERAL YEARS BEEN INSTALLED ALONG THE NORTHERN EXTERIOR WALL OF THE EIGHTEEN AND A HALF BY SEVENTEEN FOOT COMMUNICATIONS AREA. THIS WALL INCLUDES A 104 BY 81 INCH PANEL OF WINDOWS EXTERNALLY PROTECTED BY ONLY GRILLWORK. IMMEDIATELY BEHIND THIS WINDOW PANEL SIT TWO ASR'S, AND THE HW28. THE KW7 SITS IMMEDIATELY ADJACENT TO THE WINDOW APERATURE. VISUAL COMPROMISE HAS BEEN AVOIDED BY PAINTING THE GLASS PANES IN THIS WINDOW PANEL. THE OUTSIDE DECORATIVE GRILLWORK, WHICH IS ACCESSIBLE FROM A LARGE FLAT ROOF AREA, IS MADE OF HALF-INCH SQUARE STEEL RODS AND IS ANCHORED IN THE WALL. WE ESTIMATE THAT THIS GRILLWORK COULD BE CONFIDENTIAL

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REMOVED BY A MOB OR DEDICATED INTRUDER WITHIN THREE TO FIVE

MINUTES. VISUAL COMPROMISE, EXPOSING PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT TO THE OUTSIDE YARD, WOULD REQUIRE NO MORE THAN SEVERAL TOSSED STONES THROUGH THE PAINTED GLASS.

3. THE POST PROPOSED AS EARLY AS 1972 THE CORRECTION OF THIS SITUATION. SUBSEQUENT POST AND RSO REPORTS HAVE REITERATED THE PROBLEM AND THE RECOMMENDATION. IN A COMPREHENSIVE TELEGRAM TO THE REGIONAL SECURITY OFFICER IN CARACAS OF MARCH 13, 1973, THE POST RECOMMENDED BULLETPROOFING THIS AREA. SUBSEQUENT VISITS TO THE POST BY THE RSO AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNICIANS RESULTED IN THE RECOMMENDATION TO REPLACE THE WINDOW WITH STEELPLATING. ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS SUCH AS BRICKING OR POURING CONCRETE DEFERRED TO THE STEELPLATING RECOMMENDATION BECAUSE OF THE APPARENT HIGHER WEIGHT FACTOR INVOLVED IN BRICK OR CONCRETE. WE ESTIMATE THAT UTILIZING ONE QUARTER INCH STEEL PLATING TO COVER THE AREA OF ABOUT 63 SQUARE FEET WOULD INVOLVE AN INCREASED WEIGHT ON THE EXTERIOR WALL OF 710 POUNDS. THERE ARE NO STRUCTURAL CHANGES FORESEEN IN THIS BUT AN ADDITIONAL SECOND FLOOR WALL LOAD WILL BE PLACED ON THE STRUCTURE. A LOCAL CONTRACTOR ESTIMATED THE JOB WOULD COST \$275 A YEAR AGO; HE NOW ESTIMATES \$500 DUE TO SPIRALLING COSTS. YOUR IMMEDIATE APPROVAL OF THIS LONG-STANDING RECOMMENDATION AND FUNDING AUTHORIZATION WOULD PERMIT THIS WORK TO BE SUPERVISED BY TECHNICAL SECURITY PEOPLE PRESENTLY ON SITE.

INTERNAL WALL CONFIGURATION

4. THE COMMUNICATIONS AREA WOULD BE A RECTANGULAR ROOM BUT FOR THE FACT THAT THERE IS AN L-SHAPED NICHE (5 FEET 3 INCHES BY 3 FEET 10 INCHES) LOCATED JUST TO THE LEFT OF THE VAULT DOOR ENTRY INTO THE AREA. THIS L-SHAPED NICHE PREVIOUSLY SERVED TO OFFER ACCESS TO THE OFFICE OF THE POLITICAL OFFICER. THIS DOOR IS NO LONGER UTILIZED AND PROVIDES AN UNDESIRABLE SECOND ACCESS TO THE RESTRICTED POLITICAL AREA. THIS ALCOVE OFF THE CORRIDOR IS PRESENTLY USED FOR NOTHING MORE THAN A CATCH-ALL. THE EMBASSY PROPOSES THE PERMANENT SEALING OF THE DOOR TO THE POLITICAL OFFICER'S OFFICE AND EXTENSION OF THE EXISTING CORRIDOR WALL TO ABUTT THE WALL OF THE POLITICAL OFFICER'S SECRETARY'S OFFICE. AN ACCESS DOOR WOULD THEN BE MADE THROUGH ONE OF THE WALLS OF THE L-SHAPED STRUCTURE FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS AREA THEREBY AFFORDING THE CONFIDENTIAL

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COMMUNICATIONS AREA ADDITIONAL SPACE AND IMPROVE THE POLITICAL OFFICE SECURITY.

5. THIS CHANGE WOULD ALSO ENABLE THE POST TO CORRECT A LONG-STANDING PROBLEM. AT PRESENT THE E&E HF/VHF TRANSCEIVER SET-UP IS LOCATED OUTSIDE THE C&R AREA MAKING IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR C&R PERSONNEL TO PROPERLY MONITOR THESE RADIOS. IN TRYING TO MONITOR THIS EQUIPMENT, VOLUME MUST BE TURNED UP TO THE POINT

WHERE VOICE TRANSMISSIONS BLARE INTO THE EXECUTIVE OFFICES AND DOWNSTAIRS PUBLIC WAITING AREA. BY SHIFTING THE RADIOS TO THE PROPOSED AREAS, THEY COULD EASILY BE MONITORED AND TRANSMISSION WOULD BE CONFINED TO THE SECURE COMMUNICATION'S AREA. AT THE PROPOSED LOCATION, THE TRANSCEIVERS WOULD BE 20 FEET (VICE PRESENT 20 FEET) FROM THE KW7, TWELVE FEET (VICE 18 FEET) FROM THE HW28, EIGHTEEN FEET (VICE 22 FEET) FROM THE ASR'S AND FOURTEEN FEET (VICE 6 FEET) FROM THE PATCH PANEL. THE ACTUAL RELOCATION OF THE RADIOS COULD BE EFFECTED ON SUBSEQUENT CEO VISIT. A/OC INDICATES THAT A THIRTY-FIVE FOOT SEPARATION OF VOICE RADIO FROM CRYPTO EQUIPMENT IS NECESSARY. THIS SEPARATION DOES NOT NOW EXIST NOR COULD IT BE PRACTICALLY REALIZED IN THIS BUILDING. POST FEELS THE ABOVE PLAN IS A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT PROVIDING BOTH IMPROVED PHYSICAL AND COMMUNICATIONS SECURITY AND MORE EFFECTIVE SPACE UTILIZATION.

6. A LOCAL CONTRACTOR HAS ESTIMATED THAT HE CAN CONSTRUCT THIS WALL, SEAL THE DOOR AND PERFORATE THE OPENING FOR \$400. HE WOULD PREFER UTILIZING THE SAME MATERIALS AS PRESENTLY EXISTS IN THE OTHER WALLS (HOLLOW CLAY BLOCK) AND HE ESTIMATES HE WOULD BE ADDING APPROXIMATELY 1057 LBS OF WEIGHT. IF HE WERE TO POUR THE WALL HE WOULD BE ADDING APPROXIMATELY 1390 LBS. ALTHOUGH DIFFICULT TO ASCERTAIN, BOTH POST REPRESENTATIVES AND VISITING RTC PERSONNEL SUSPECT NONE OF THESE WALLS ARE LOAD-BEARING. POST AGAIN SEEKS IMMEDIATE APPROVAL OF THIS ALTERATION AND FUNDING AUTHORIZATION SO THAT THIS PROJECT COULD ALSO BE SUPERVISED BY TECHNICAL SECURITY PERSONNEL ON SITE.

7. DURING A RECENT ORIENTATION VISIT OF THE NEW REGIONAL SECURITY OFFICER, MR. JAMES BERMINGHAM, TO PORT OF SPAIN HE APPROVED IN PRINCIPLE THE WORK TO BE UNDERTAKEN AND THROUGH HIS MUCH APPRECIATED EFFORTS OBTAINED THE ASSISTANCE OF TECHNICAL SECURITY PERSONNEL TO PERFORM MOST OF THE WORK. THE TECHNICIANS ARE NOW PRESENT AND READY TO UNDERTAKE THE TWO JOBS OUTLINED ABOVE
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AND THE POST ESTIMATES THE WORK CAN BE DONE FOR APPROXIMATELY US\$500 WHICH INCLUDES COSTS OF MATERIALS AND RENTAL OF SOME EQUIPMENT. MOST LABOR WOULD BE PERFORMED BY THE SECURITY TECHNICAL TEAM DUE TO NECESSITY OF ACCESS TO RESTRICTED AREAS. THUS APPROVAL TO PROCEED WITH ALTERATIONS WHILE TECHNICAL SECURITY PERSONNEL ARE HERE SHOULD SAVE AT LEAST \$400 OF ESTIMATED COSTS IF PERFORMED BY OUTSIDE CONTRACTOR. ADDITIONALLY, TO ATTEMPT THESE ALTERATIONS LATER WITHOUT TECHNICAL SECURITY SUPERVISION WOULD CREATE FAR MORE HAZARDOUS PHYSICAL SECURITY SITUATION THAN PROGRESS OF WORK.

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